Providing facilities to Vaishno Devi pilgrims

598. SHRI BALAVANT *ALIAS* BALAPTE:

SHRI SHREEGOPAL VYAS:

Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Central Government and the State Government of Jammu and Kashmir bear any expenditure for providing facilities to Vaishno Devi pilgrims;

(b) if so, the details of the expenditure incurred during last three years and till date year-wise;

(c) the number of the pilgrims benefited during the above mentioned period;

(d) the details of the facilities provided to pilgrims by Government;

(e) whether there is any proposal of Government to provide more facilities to the pilgrims; and

(f) if so, the details thereof and the estimated expenditure thereon?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM (SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI): (a): The facilities to Shri Vaishno Devi pilgrims are being provided by Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board Katra out of their own resources.

(b) A one time assistance of Rs. 40.38 lacs for construction of Yatri Niwas Bhawan, pilgrims sheds at Katra and tented accommodation has been provided by Government of India in the year 1993. During last 3 years no assistance for providing facilities to the pilgrims has been provided by the Central Government and the State Government.

(c) The number of tourist visiting Vaishno Devi for the last three years are as follows:

Year	Tourist arrivals (in lakh)
2004	61.09
2005	62.51
2006	69.50
2007 upto 12th December)	68.87

(d) to (f) Provision of facilities to the pilgrim tourists at the Shrine is a regular feature of the activities of the Shrine Board. The Government's role is limited only to the extent of providing the necessary infrastructure support like road connectivity, drinking water facilities and power supply etc. to the Katra Town.

Development of tourist spot in Andaman and Nicobar Islands

599. SHRI RAMDAS AGARWAL: Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has prepared any "Vision Document" for the speedy development of Andaman and Nicobar Islands during the next 10 to 15 years;

(b) whether Government proposer to make Andaman and Nicobar Islands as one of the

most beautiful and attractive tourist destination like other islands in the world and should become a big asset for the Indian economy; and

(c) what Central assistance Government propose to give to Andaman and Nicobar Islands in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM (SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI): (a) to (c) The development and promotion of tourism is primarily the responsibility of the respective State Governments/ UT Adminsitrations. However, the Ministry of Tourism extends financial assistance to them for tourism related projects which are identified in consultation and interaction with them. To facilitate the efforts of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands Administration, Government of India had prepared in 2003 a 20-Year Perspective Plan for development of tourism in Andaman and Nicobar Islands.

During the Tenth Five Year Plan, an amount of Rs.6.25 lakh was sanctioned by Ministry of Tourism, Government of India to Andaman and Nicobar Islands for tourism related activities. The Government of india has also allocated Rs. 76.5 crore as additional Central Assistance under Tsunami Rehabilitation Programme for up-gradation of tourism in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands to be utilized in 3 consecutive years, i.e. 2006-07 to 2008-09.

Development of Chandipur Beach in Orissa

600. MS. PRAMILA BOHIDAR: Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Chandipur beach in Orissa is proposed to be developed as a tourist resort of international standards by the World Tourism Organisation;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether a team of the above organization has visited the place to examine its potential; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM (SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI): (a) to (d) A team from the World Tourism Organisation had visited Chandipur and had meetings with Collector Balasore, Local Officials, representative from NGOs and travel trade and collected relevant information material regarding tourism potential of the place. However, no specific project proposal has been received from United Nations World Tourism organisation or the State Government in this regard. As part of Central Financial Assistance, Ministry of Tourism has sanctioned an amount of Rs. 208.55 lakhs for the development of tourism relatd facilities at Chandipur under the project Integrated Development of Chandipur-Talasari-Udaypur-Chandaneswar-Remuna-Panchalingeswar-Nilagiri Circuit. In addition, an amount of Rs. 3.00 lakh was also sanctioned for the Golden Beach Festicval at Chandipur on Sea.

Incentive Scheme for Budget Hotels

601. DR. K. KESHAVA RAO: Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether her Ministry has formulated a new incentive scheme for 'budget hotels' to boost tourism;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) by when the scheme will become operational?